

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Office of the Executive Director
Interagency Advisory Group
1900 E Street, N. W.

Minutes of the Committee on
Job Evaluation
March 24, 1978

The meeting was chaired by Paul A. Katz, Chief, Standards Division.
Items on the agenda were:

1. Announcements
2. Developments under the Freedom of Information Act
3. The organization and activities of the Job Evaluation Committee for the coming year

I. Announcements

- o Mr. Katz briefly reviewed the procedures for agencies and others to submit objections to the approved standards for Secretary, Clerk-Typist and Clerk-Stenographer. Because the material on the three standards was voluminous and the occupations are closely related, the objection period for the standards was extended from 15 days to four weeks. Accordingly, Mr. Katz reminded the members of the March 27 deadline for submitting objections to the Director, Bureau of Policy and Standards.
- o Mr. Katz reported that the International Civil Service Commission team conducting the "pay comparability" survey of Federal positions has been very pleased with agency response to the request for information and materials on specific jobs. The team is proceeding in accordance with its previously announced plan, with visits to the agencies to obtain more specific job information.
- o On a related matter, the Organization of American States (OAS) has contracted with Hay Associates to compare OAS jobs and pay levels with those of other international organizations, private industry, and the U.S. Government. Standards Division is providing technical assistance to OAS and Hay Associates staff. The study is scheduled for completion in about two months and the results will support OAS recommendations for staff salary revisions. Mr. Katz indicated that he does not expect that agencies will be involved in this study.



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- o Mr. Katz spoke about the Technology Transfer function in the Federal Government and the importance of the classification community in understanding and providing support to that function. The National Science Foundation, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and several agencies (e.g., DOD, NASA, Commerce) are supporting the objective of transferring Federal technology knowledges, and particularly achievements, to operating municipal programs. To do so, special scientific positions have been established. The concern is their proper classification as to grade, but particularly as to series. The principal series are engineering and the physical sciences, not, of course, technical writing. Problems or recommendations on this issue should be communicated directly to Paul Katz, 632-4516. None were volunteered at the meeting.

II. Developments Under the Freedom of Information Act

Discussion of this subject was in continuation of that begun at the January 17, 1978, meeting of the Committee. The discussion included:

- o consideration of and comments on a recent decision of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Labor Relations on an Unfair Labor Practice Complaint regarding an agency's non-disclosure of materials relating to the trial application of draft FES standards.
- o individual agency reactions and comments on the directions which operations under the Freedom of Information Act appear to be taking.

No firm conclusions were reached with respect to a uniform approach which the Commission and agencies might take on releasing materials connected with the standards development program. However, a recurrent theme expressed by many agencies was the feeling that, once provided to the Commission, agency comments and data on draft standards become the property of the Commission.

Although the group initially felt that making public all comments at all stages would not have an adverse impact on the quality of comments, that position was reversed by the end of the lengthy discussion. It was felt by a majority of the group that it was critical to keep comments to draft standards--during the standards development process--private between the writer and the recipient. This applied not only between the agency and the Commission but equally within agencies. Two principal reasons were advanced for this view:

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- o The need for higher echelons to assure responsible summary input by balancing and critiquing the quality of the facts and their analysis that form the foundation to the differing positions often taken.
- o The need for assuring that the Commission receives the candid input of agencies.

It was felt that even after passage of time with an open comment procedure, comments from agencies would, in many cases, be watered down. This would happen because of inherent conflicts, within agencies, between concerns for the technical accuracy of standards and the impact of the standards on not only agency jobs, but also on agency program accomplishment. One commenter noted that an "overgraded" standard--even by a small amount--could only be beneficial to the agency, as it would help them in the competition for recruitment and retention of employees. It would not penalize them in slightly higher average grade costs--since the latter typically can be easily financed.

Mr. Katz expressed his gratitude for the candid discussion of these issues by the committee members. He particularly appreciated the efforts of the members to reflect their agencies' views by having discussed these matters with their personnel directors and associates prior to the meeting. He indicated that the views expressed will be fully considered as further decisions are made in this area.

III. Organization and Activities of the IAG Committee

In opening the discussion, Mr. Katz mentioned some possible new directions for the Committee which the Standards Division has considered. These include:

- o greater reliance upon agency members for suggesting, arranging and leading Committee meetings;
- o increased emphasis on subcommittee activities directed at identifying problems and recommending solutions;
- o the reactivation of presently dormant subcommittees and the establishment of new subcommittees as appropriate;
- o increased involvement of agency Chiefs of Classification in Committee activities;
- o meetings with groups of Chiefs of Classification, arranged through the IAG Committee mechanism, to

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surface problem areas and to motivate joint action leading to the solution of such problems; and

- o continued involvement of the Committee in planing the Standards Division annual program of standards projects.

Suggestions and comments from Committee members included the following:

- o The IAG Committee is now viewed primarily as a "working group"; however, its charter might also include activities related to the development of the members.
- o In the past, the Standards Division has held sessions with agency classifiers to explain and elaborate upon specific standards. These sessions, sometimes referred to as "Standards with an Impact" meetings, were very beneficial and should be reinstituted. With the Factor Evaluation System now on its feet, these sessions would be particularly valuable in helping to assure that the new FES standards and FES concepts, in general, are understood and consistently applied. The "Leadership Program" of Standards Division was already helping here and could be expanded to include detailed attention to specific and individual standards.
- o The recent issuance of the FES standard for the Secretary series perhaps presents an especially good opportunity for a "Standards With an Impact" session. This would permit the standards writer to clarify this new standard, as needed, with a view to assuring that this high-population occupation is treated consistently by all agencies.
- o While not necessarily a function to be performed by the Committee, training and elaboration on individual FES standards might also be given to Commission regional office evaluation staffs. Agencies sometimes encounter situations where individual CSC regional offices reach different conclusions on jobs which exist nationwide. These situations create problems for both the agencies and the Commission and should be avoided as much as possible. Discussion and training on individual FES standards might be helpful in this regard.
- o Sessions with the Committee to discuss standards just before the final decisions are made on those standards would be useful to the agencies, but perhaps even more useful to the Commission.

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- o Committee members might call the Standards Division when they have suggestions for IAG Committee meeting agenda items.
- o An annual meeting which brings together Chiefs of Classification, Chiefs of Compensation, and the Standards Division would be very desirable. It would provide a good opportunity to discuss mutual problems and concerns, and would help us all better understand our counterparts' jobs. Such a meeting--perhaps a "retreat"--should be held out of town where there would be less diversion on day-to-day work matters. Other IAG Committees do this, and this Committee should try it too. The Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville or the Sheraton in Fredericksburg might be an appropriate site for a retreat.

Mr. Katz said that the suggestions received would not only be given careful consideration, but he hoped that some specific results could be reported at the next meeting. Particularly, he supported the "Chief's" meeting, with a view toward it developing an approach to the coordination of all classification related activities, both at agency headquarters and at the Commission.

In relation to other continuing operations of the Committee Mr. Katz indicated that it is time again to bring the Committee's membership list up to date. He also suggested that concurrent attention should be given to the possible reactivation of subcommittees and the establishment of new subcommittees, if they are needed. Accordingly, all agencies are requested to complete the form attached to these minutes. Completed forms should be returned to the Standards Division by May 5, 1978.

IAG COMMITTEE ON JOB EVALUATION
DESIGNATION OF AGENCY MEMBERS

AGENCY _____

SUBMITTING OFFICIAL _____

The following member and alternate are designated to serve as our representatives to the IAG Committee on Job Evaluation:

| | <u>MEMBER</u> | <u>ALTERNATE</u> |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Name | _____ | _____ |
| Organization | _____ | _____ |
| Address | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| Phone Number | _____ | _____ |

SUBCOMMITTEES

Our Committee member, alternate, or other representative would prefer to serve on the following subcommittee: (Note: Please indicate if the designee would be willing to serve in a subcommittee leadership capacity.)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>ORGANIZATION/ADDRESS</u> | <u>TELEPHONE</u> | <u>LEADERSHIP</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Fes Monitoring & Overview | | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Classifier Training & Development | | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Single Agency Standards | | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>ORGANIZATION/ADDRESS</u> | <u>TELEPHONE</u> | <u>LEADERSHIP</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Occupational Coding & Analysis | | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Other (Please indicate suggested additional subcommittees) | | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Please send completed form, by May 5, 1978, to:

Mr. M. R. Moser, Chief
Methods Development Section, Room 3627
U.S. Civil Service Commission
1900 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20415